



Corrente Calamo

By P. S. Du Pont



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Currente Calamo

By P. F. du Pont



1907

Patterson & White Co.

PUBLISHERS

PHILADELPHIA

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Warner H. Jenkins
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IN APPRECIATION OF
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Author's Preface

In collecting this little volume of poems and verse, I have placed first those of sentiment, followed by sonnets, miscellaneous and dialect poems in the order named. The idea of these verses possessing special literary merit has had no influence on me in going into print.

These poems were written prior to 1905.

THE AUTHOR

Merion, Pa., 1907

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The Ballad of Graden Floe *

TO W. H. R.

Beyond the little fisher town
The hills of barren sand go down
In undulation gray and brown
To end in gaping cliffs that frown
 Upon the sea, where vessels go;
While, ever playing there, the tide
Now buries deep or hurries wide
The fear of all the country-side,
 The sands of Graden Floe.

Her soft white arm and bosom bare,
A bright brown luster on her hair,
There row'd a maiden unaware
That jaws of death were lurking there—
 She little wot of grief and woe;
But there within her fishers' boat
Was all content to sing and float
Until its prow had gently smote
 The sands of Graden Floe.

The Cross, with beads of silver strung
On flax, around her neck was hung,
While from her lip the song she sung
A thousand silver echoes flung
 From off the cliff's embattled row;

* Quicksands on the East coast of Scotland.

The tide and sand awaiting each,
She lightly leapt upon the beach—
They never leave who ever reach
The sands of Graden Floe.

Ah, wild and sad the maid's despair;
Ah, wild the waving of her hair;
Then last the floating up in air
A gentle maiden's whispered prayer
That God his grace on her bestow.
A sudden shudder hurried wide
And shook the beach and shook the tide
And passed, and left the sand to hide
The dead in Graden Floe.

When last from out that fatal bar
Shall come full many a mariner—
Full many a dark and cruel tar—
When all of these awaiting are
Before their God their fate to know—
There in the dawn of judgment light,
Girt with the beads of silver bright,
A spotless soul—an angel white—
Shall float from Graden Floe.

Southern Love Song

TO N. B. G.

Nancy, my Nancy, say, do you love me?
Will you not answer, will you not say?
Well do I know you are far, far above me,
Well do I know you are brighter than day;
Still, oh my Nancy, how oft' have I told you
How great my love for you, how great is its sway;
Hear me, oh, hear me, 'tis no idle fancy,
Hear me, my darling, hear me I pray.

Of't' have I walked in the gloaming beside you,
Longing to hold you at last in my arms;
Lucky, oh lucky, is he who shall bride you—
You with the wealth of your womanly charms;
Come to me, Nancy, no ill can betide you—
Come and but love me and rest in my arms.

Nancy, when with you I ever am better,
For moves all around you a holier air;
Free! I am free from each fastening fetter,
As free as a spirit for pouring a prayer.
Nancy, how deeply, how deeply your debtor
You make me, dispelling my sin and my care;
Nancy, come Nancy, 'twere better, much better,
To cancel all owing and start on the square.

Nancy, my Nancy, say, do you love me?
Will you not answer, will you not say?
Well do I know you are far, far above me,
Well do I know you are brighter than day;
Still, oh my Nancy, how oft' have I told you
How great my love for you, how great is its sway;
Hear me, oh, hear me, 'tis no idle fancy,
Hear me, my darling, hear me I pray.

Stanzas on Woman

Oh, lovely woman, oft' a thrill
You cause within the breast
Of those who hear your laughter trill,
Who see your smiles, that linger still
A sweet reflection of the will
Or fancy—half unguessed.

And when we ponder o'er a face
That mem'ry can define—
The curve of neck, the fringe of lace,
The poise of head, the winsome grace—
What other one could take the place
Of *her* we hold divine?

And it is strange that those whom fate
Return of love denied
Should bitter grow and learn to hate
Their very life; though still they wait
Until their 'lotted years abate—
The years that have but lied?

Oh, lovely woman, still we love
You for the blessings given;
Your tenderness, as of the Dove,
Your purity, as saints above—
For you have proved, and still shall prove,
The stars of earth, from heaven.

La Gioconda

A lady's smile, or brightly painted curtain—
Some Arab desert scene or Paris gay—
Both, though of pleasing nature, make uncertain
What is behind, the purpose or the play;
So down the tiers of crowded circles sloping,
And mid the murmur of the waiting pit,
All at the curtain gaze, though ever hoping
Its speedy rise on beauty and on wit.

What of the lady's smile? I wait, as they,
Till it may pass and show the truth, the play.

For Margaret

Margaret, when the shaded lamp
Had cast its beam athwart the page,
You read of king and court and camp
And beauties of another age—
And as you read I loved to trace
The thought and beauty in your face.

Ah, Margaret, that downward look
To me was of angelic charm,
Your thoughts intent upon the book
That lay at rest along your arm—
A stupid book, a little thing,
Yet worthy of much envying.

Margaret, knights and ladies gay
Are naught to me when you are near,
The king and army in array
Are naught but phantoms pale and drear—
Ah may, dear child, you always look
Lovely as when you read the book.

A Lady's Smile

'Twas only a smile in the moonlight,
As I held her stirrup in place,
A smile in the lovely moonlight,
A smile on a lovely face.

When forth she leaned in the saddle,
And gathered the double rein,
And gave me that smile in the moonlight,
As I patted her horse's mane.

Yet neither kiss, nor pledge, nor clasp,
Holds mem'ry's dearest place;
But a smile in the lovely moonlight,
A smile on a lovely face.

To * * * * *

The harvest moon, new risen in the sky,
Lit all her chamber with a splendor golden,
Bespeaking well of song and balcony
In Venice, grand and olden.

The beauty of her chamber white endow'd
With every breadth of maiden purity,
Could but foretell, as stars within the cloud,
Of bright futurity.

With careful care her garments she'd outlaid,
Her little smock, her hose, her outer dress;
And, oh, the whiteness where her curtain played
To catch the wind's caress.

The while its muslin rustle to me came
As silver music o'er a silent sea;
Oh God, what right, what right had I to claim
The love of such as she!

For all around her seemed a hallow'd air,
All holier far, and deeper,
As though, detailed from angel legion there,
A seraph guards the sleeper.

And all around my heart she casts a spell,
And in the spell, contented and demurely,
I learn the teachings she has shown so well,
The ways of living purely;

While oft' outreaching fancy fondly paints
Her as a wandering spirit from the sun,
And of His many hallow'd heavenly saints
God gives to me this one.

The Maid of Agincourt

Of maidens rare and debonair,
Of ladies rich and poor,
I ne'er have met one fairer yet
Than her of Agincourt;

For in her grace of form and face
An angel white I'm sure
Could not surpass the winning lass
I know at Agincourt.

A paradise enshrines her eyes
And lights her way demure,
While every breeze bears charities
From her at Agincourt.

Howe'er it seem, myself I deem
Among the good and pure,
From having seen her sunny sheen
Of smiles at Agincourt.

So when to-day I'm far away
My lot I scarce endure,
But wish for when I'll see again
The maid of Agincourt.

The Ballad of the Triumph of Prayer

By a moss-grown kirk by the moss-green sea
A lover lingered longingly,
And gently pled with her whom he
 Would wed and love for aye;
But many a prayer must rest unheard
When many a maiden doubts the word
 Of those who to them pray.

“Then take this little cross,” said he,
“And when I sail the boundless sea
To know that you may think of me
 Will drive my grief away;
And, be I long away or soon
Return, pray grant this simple boon—
 That you shall for me pray.”

So he cast his lot in rope and sail,
In weather fair and thundering gale,
And suffered rain and sun and hail
 For many a weary day;
And never a voice would call to sin
But ever a voice would call within
 That she had promised to pray.

And the maid at home at her father's cot
Never a word of her pledge forgot—
 That she had promised to pray—

So first, for the sake of the pledge, she 'gan
Morn and eve to pray for the man
Who sailed so far away.

But great the love of women all,
Great their love if they love at all,
And soon the cross upon the wall
Had all her heart in sway;
Morn and eve with his name in prayer,
More and more she learned to care
For him for whom she'd pray.

* * * * *

At the moss-grown kirk by the moss-green sea
The bell is ringing merrily,
The maidens wait upon the lea
For those who come that way;
And here there comes a blushing bride,
And walks the lover at her side
For whom she promised to pray.

The Tempter

Dark is the night, and robbed of all its glory,
When moon and stars are shrouded in a veil,
And through the tossing oaks I hear the story
The winds wail.

Dark are my thoughts—far, far astray from honor—
When all my ardent soul pursues the plan
Of working evil influence upon her—
I, a *man*.

The Lady I've Never Seen

To battle a curséd phantom,
Of dark and horrible mien,
To fight for the hand of a lady—
A lady I've never seen.

That is the lot from heaven
The God ordained for me,
While never the sight was given
A guiding star to see.

I, and a phantom born of sin,
In a battle of sin begot,
Fight, and ever I strive to win,
To win—but I know I shall not!

But her form is lithe and bending,
As the bough of the willow green,
This lady of Fancy's lending,
This lady I've never seen.

And what are the hues of morning,
And what is the bright sunrise,
Compared with her blush, adorning,
Compared with the light of her eyes?

So I live, in dreams, forever
As happy as man has been,
With the lady—though *see her never*—
The lady I've *never* seen.

To Ultruda

When dear Ultruda came to me
No gladder pair on land or sea,
For sky and sea and continent
Were not as great as our content—
Content to be with one another,
For she was mine and I her lover.

We, hand in hand, would wander round
Through our Utopian kingdom found,
 Where flowing rivers chanted clear
 A song our hearts were glad to hear,
What time amid the forest trees
There went a thousand melodies,
 Waving the waving shade above,
 Borne on the waving wings of Love.

Now here, now there, as fancy calls,
We'd linger by the foaming falls,
 Or glide the silent flowing stream
 Where over head the mossy beam
Of some dark monarch trunk neglected
Was in the quiet flow reflected,
 And seem'd to far more darkly float
 Than the dark shadow of our boat.

The dales and rolling hills were ours,
And when we strolled among their flowers
 Our spirits breathed a pure delight
 To note their blended colors bright—
To note with what a mighty yield
Was covered o'er each grassy field,
 Seeming in numbers past the words,
 Like to a flock of golden birds.

The Locust Tree

In the lee of a locust tree,
In the lee of a locust tree,
Whose blowing blossoms scent the air
As though an angel choir fair
Had been with hallowed censer there—
Altering all too pure, too rare,
For vain humanity.

(Ah, scent the flower'd locust flings
From off her green and drooping wings,
For countless ages may it roll
Through ether blue to stir the soul
Of man and give him for a goal
A thousand better things.)

If *thou* wert here with me,
In the lee of the locust tree,
If could'st be here, thy hand in mine,
And with me breathe the scent divine
Where fairy sheaves of flowers shine—
Ah, joys in common do entwine
Two souls eternally.

The Farm at Fraun Revisited

The harvest moon looks down to see
Through broken blind and shattered pane
Upon the floor a crimson stain;
There in the room once dear to me
Where Angela had lain,
My mistress at the farm at Fraun,
The placid moon looked down upon.

The harvest moon has colored red
The waters of the tarn that held
The child my Angela's breast had welled,
Her shame, my child that Angela fed
When wish for death her anguish swelled—
Wish for death at the farm at Fraun
The chilly moon looked down upon.

Poor Angela, your wish came true,
For proud was I of blood and race,
And pride was written on my face,
And never a bit my heart did rue
For you and your disgrace—
For your disgrace at the farm at Fraun
The scornful moon looked down upon.

Oh God! that night you pled with me,
That last dread eve, your eyes so wild,
You showed the babe, my new-born child,
As fair a babe as a man could see
As it cried to me and smiled—
The purest smile at the farm at Fraun
The lucky moon looked down upon.

I struck the blow that killed her then
(For she had vow'd that all should see
The babe was mine upon her knee)
For who could tell me *how* or *when*
My proud and ancient family
Could claim the maid at the farm at Fraun
The pauper moon looked down upon?

What of the babe? The tarn well knows!
All senses in me since have died—
My soul (if had I one,) my pride,
All sense of joy, all sense of woes—
My ghostly body withered, dried,
As dead as the silent farm at Fraun
The callous moon looks down upon.

To Alice

You are the poison ivy, Alice, that clings around the oak ;
I am the tree, you are the vine,
And the winds of heaven all incline
To free me of your yoke.

I toss my giant branches high,
But wrapped around me still you lie
As snug as a lady's cloak.

Ah, better the axe's stroke,
Than to die of the poison ivy
That clings around the oak !

Song

The laddie sleeps through the bright sunshine
In the strength of the growing day,
Who's reveled the night in song and wine
When laughter had its sway.

While down by the bend of the river wide,
Waving a bough so green,
There walks a maiden, laughing-eyed,
Gazing the twigs between.

Heigh ho, heigh ho, the world is out of gait,
When a lad must lie in the lees of wine
While the woman he loves must wait.

Polly Dubray

“Very sincerely, Polly Dubray,”
That is the way she writes to me;
And I ponder what can her meaning be.
Only the set, conventional way
Society people day by day
Accept or refuse for a ball or a tea?
Or a meaning more than her words can say—
With her “Very sincerely, Polly Dubray.”

“Very sincerely, Polly Dubray,”
On the paper blue with the faint perfume
Of a single violet in the room.
The blue is as true as steel, they say,
But the violet is a flower gay;
So 'twixt alternate hope and gloom
I ponder her meaning day by day—
Her “Very sincerely, Polly Dubray.”

Drown'd

A down the street, where flick'ring lamps
Cast but a feeble gleam,
To where the bridge, an arch of light,
Was bent athwart the stream,
A woman, scarce from girlhood yet,
There walked as in a dream.

And on her face of beauty shone
Such signs of grief and woe,
As only suffering saints alone
And blessed martyrs know,
The while she held her way to where
The river swept below.

No more, praise God, the city ways
She walks on murky nights,
No more, praise God, she eats the bread
Won at such sinful heights—
Ah, lover untrue, if you but knew
Of her death at the bend of lights.

For * * * * *

As ye know the strength of a mother's love,
As ye know the sun and the seas endure,
As ye know that there is a God above,
I knew her love, at least, was pure.

“You have taken my all,” she said to me,
“All honor, dear as life, away”—
And now *my* life, though once so free,
Is as an evil dream to-day.

She died, and oft’ at her grave at eve,
When the scornful sun has sought repose,
These tears of an aching heart I leave—
These tears, and a pure white rose.

The seasons roll, but still I wait,
And this, this only, still I pray,
That I may be at heaven’s gate
When she shall pass on Judgment Day.

The Atheist Lover

Despair, despair, despair,
Ah, never more may we,
As then, a happy pair,
Dwell in sweet unity—
All joy is dead, there’s nothing fair
Since *thou* art lost to me.

Remorse, remorse, remorse,
Deep, cold, as cold as stone;
The river holds its course,
The mountain forests moan—
Ah, God in heaven, what hellish force
Must make me grieve alone?

Is there a God? I doubt!
For would a God stand by
While desperation put to rout
All prayer, all purity?
The seas are dried, the stars are out,
The end comes silently.

Rejected

In a castle on a highland,
By a silent forest shade,
Dwells a heaven-embellished maid.
Tremblingly I'd offered my hand,
Long my court to her I'd paid,
Wildly had my fancy play'd
When the purple colors fade
From the sun-forsaken sky-land.

High and strong her massive bowers,
And, within a crystal lake,
They an image true would make
Of their own embattled towers—
Ay, within a crystal lake,
Where the windy ripples shake,
Where the turrets seem to quake
As smitten by the Powers.

And, as on the lake, neglected
To the windy ripples dart,
Her fair image on my heart
Is for evermore reflected—
Ay, reflected on my heart,
Whence, though many a sigh may start,
It shall never, never part
From one rejected.

Fragment

Women and weather both are so uncertain
That oftentimes our brightest plans are marred,
And when a lady deigns to raise her curtain
It mostly proves her casement doubly barred;
Or should you wish some hunt, some chase divertin',
I'll wager two to one 'tis raining hard.

This start upon my lay is pessimistic,
I ever had a pessimistic way,
And often paint the really realistic
In commonplace monotony of gray;
Yet chance anon to strike some thought majestic,
To light my work with one redeeming ray.

'Twas in the land where aspens shed their snowy
White buds, the time of year was early May,
'Twas in the land where winds were soft and blowy
And play'd from down the mountain all the day—
A land whose nights are mild, whose stars are showy,
As never shine the stars here, far away.

River and forest, lake and mountain sky-land
Each lent alluring beauty to the scene,
To form the whole, a fertile, rolling highland,
Thrown out the length of listless peaks between;
And I, I said, "This country shall be my land
And I shall rule as king and she as queen."

She with her wealth of auburn tresses flowing,
As a broad river ripples in a dream,
She with a face of angel feature showing,
In light and shade as thought and fancy gleam,
She with a life demurely happy knowing
The warmth of love and its florescent beam.

She was the daughter of a vicar holy,
The fairest wanderer 'mid sylvan bowers,
The rarest amethyst, where, winding slowly,
The mountain mist creeps round these hills of ours,
The meekest violet, that, smiling lowly,
Teaches the ways of goodness to the flowers.

* * * * *

To Polly, Jane, and Rose

Far in the happy days of youth
Had I romances three,
And still they're marked within the
Golden book of memory;
But though my *three* they loved me not,
No flower ever blows
That could compare with either one—
With Polly, Jane, or Rose.

They were to me the guiding stars
Of the sweet land of youth,
Where every hope and vision lies,
Where all is love and truth;
So now, at any nocturn board,
The spirit never flows,
Without, at first, the mention
Of Polly, Jane, and Rose.

They loved me not; but do I weep?
Nay! nay! that's not for me!
I rather love to be consoled
With sweet philosophy.
Compare my bacheloric joys
With benedictine woes—
But to 'em all (God bless 'em!)—
To Polly, Jane, and Rose.

Sonnets

The Sword and the Cross

I dreamed a dream—a portent or a sign
For good or ill I do not know—behold
Around my neck there hung a cross of gold
Lit with the splendor of the bright divine
White light of heaven. Then I grasped the twine
Of flax that bound it to my breast, and hold,
It vanished leaving still a sword whose cold,
Keen edge made mock at me with cruel shine.

The dream had passed, and I, awaking, thought
I heard a silver, seraph voice proclaim:
“The cross without the sword is but as naught;
The sword without the cross is but a name;
Nor he who holds to both shall grieve for aught;
The years of strife are still the years of fame.”

Lines

Ay, twenty-one to-day, and never slid
A score and one of years more uselessly,
While buried deep as in a foreign sea
What thoughtless sins within those years are hid.

And when, at times, I walk alone and bid
My soul to speak, it says: "I would that thee
Wert fashioned of a firmer mind and free
From half thy sin, of half thy folly rid."

Still, evil done is evil past, and, set
Within the crown of Future Days, appears
The chance where failing souls may conquer yet,
Down the dim, listless avenue of years.

So let it rest while Time rolls on his way—
Ay, let it rest at twenty-one to-day.

Nobody's Girl

A pair of dreamy eyes, dark waving hair,
Now floating round her face in careless tress,
Caught now by slender hands you long to press,
You see her smooth the thoughtful forehead bare;
But yet you know but little does she *care*,
Under the sky for none has she caress,
Right wilful in coquetting, as her tress,
Round whose dark coil coquet her fingers fair.

Go! shall we think a woman so divine
On in celibacy shall linger still?
Reed with the reed and grass with grasses twine,
Does not the hilltop bend to kiss the rill?
On high the eagle and his fledglings whirl—
Nobody's girl, ah, is she no one's girl?

Acrostic

More of *this* generation than the past,
Far merrier than her years could testify,
A wreath upon the Muse's altar high
She gives her splendid tributes to the last.
One talk with her is as a holy fast
The spirit and the soul to satisfy,
The quiet beam of her complacent eye
Telling too plain her lot with love is cast.

Still further praise of her were easy shown,
But little can avail the praise we swell
Unless the fair one praised to you is known—
Try if you cannot guess, before we tell!
You give it up? Observe a certain rule—
Spelling the way that you were taught at school.

To * * * * *

Beloved Louis Stevenson once wrote
That Florizell, the prince, would ever tell
His friends, when smoking, as the ashes fell
First from the weed, 'twas then the charms would float
Away and leave the smoker as remote
From all his dreams as Cherubim from hell;
While still his deep, insatiate wishes swell
For all the joys on which his brethren dote.

And thus I find it with my sweetheart's kiss,
With all the many gentle pleadings done
And when the holy heaven-begotten bliss
Of that sweet moment is but yet begun—
Alas, my ling'ring after-thought, I wis,
Will be but wishes for another one.

Hope

The past of some is as a well whose rim
Gives home to night-bats flitting out and in,
The bats of black Remorse, remembered sin,
That come each day as evening shadows dim.
For struggle as they will, or pray to Him,
Or with a firm intent anew begin

To fight the fight with every *hope* to win,
They still are vanquished by their phantoms *grim*.

Their past 's an empty well, but yet they say,
 (And if you doubt it is not hard to prove)
That from an empty well the stars by day
 Are seen as bright as nightly stars we love—
Which goes to show, as Pope has shown it best,
“Hope springs eternal in the human breast.”

Evening

Oh, Sky, thou broad expanse celestial blue—
 Where ere Apollo's fiery steeds have sped,
 To seek Hespera for their Western bed,
When shadows grow and gently falls the dew—
With greater beauty than Aurora's hue,
 With all the color from the rainbow shed,
 At evening, when the sun low hides his head,
From pole to pole light all the cloud-land through.
 That gazing on thy splendor, mortal men
 May read aright from off that blazing scroll
 A song, to cheer and guide the struggling soul,
 As never flow'd from earthly poet's pen.
For who, among the better of mankind,
Unto thy striking loveliness is blind?

Miscellaneous Poems

The Ballad of the Hammock and the Pipe and the Book

Oh, what a joy it is to swing
Under the leafy canopies,
Made by the silent forest trees,
The while fair birds around you sing.
Oh, what a joy it is to swing
Stretched in a hammock, strong and high,
While a green world is swimming by,
And e'en you deem yourself on wing.
Oh, what a joy to watch o'erhead
A squirrel dart some trunk around,
Then scamper nimbly to the ground—
A burnished streak of fiery red—
To swell his store to last till spring—
Oh, what a joy it is to swing!

And give me then that friend loved best
By all within the smoker's world—
The pipe, from whose dark bowl has curled
Smoke of a sweetness nigh unguessed.
Oh, what a faithful friend is he,
The same in sunshine and in rain—

Upon Wyoming's rolling plain
And on Mount Desert by the sea
He's been an honest friend to me,
And now, beneath the forest tree,
He'll be my friend again.

And now, to make the joy complete,
Within this quiet shady nook,
Give me a boldly written book,
That I may read some daring feat
Of arms, or of one magically
Getting a wealth of Spanish gold
Out of the coral-covered hold
Of some great ship beneath the sea;
Or, of some baron bold, whose halls
Are dark, save where the torchlight falls
Upon the armor on the walls
And on the battle-battered brand;
Or, of some smiling lady fair
For whom a gallant knight must dare
To slay the dragon in his lair
To win her heart and hand.

Thus in the pleasant summertime,
Lulled by the hammock's drowsy sway,
I lie and watch the squirrels play
Upon the monarch poplar's side;

And note the waving smoke-rings ride
Into an ether fair as day;
Or read of knights and ladies gay—
Then find that, as the moments glide,
The hours have passed away.

The Incapables

Who shall tell their dismal story till the endless peoples
know it?

Who shall cite their gain of living from the sorry day
they're born?

Oh, they themselves, incapable of aught else, shall bestow
it

On a world that for the giving holds them deeper in its
scorn.

Still we meet them on the highway and they throng the
giant city,

There to idle by the shipping or to crowd the busy
mart

Ever smiling; but the wiser passer-by, with glance of
pity,

Scarcely can refrain from asking: "How much mirth
and how much art?"

For across their smiling faces there would ever glide a
shifting

Look of blankness, while their eyes as dreaming
dragons gaze afar;

And the blankness is the knowing that the stirring, soul-
uplifting

Good of Labor ne'er has led them in its battered,
brazen car.

What Pride in Labor would they find in blows of busy
sledges?

Could they joy in working slaughter on the tassel'd
rows of corn?

With the corn-knife in the autumn would they trim the
by-way hedges,

With the right arm striking strongly till the mellow
evening horn?

Oh, they are not men, but samples of a universal being,

Who a "social degradation" have imputed as a fault;
And to tell you frankly, reader, those who're known for
rightly seeing

Things have stated that these samples are unworthy
of their salt.

*Who shall tell their dismal story till the endless peoples
know it?*

*Who shall cite their gain of living from the sorry day
they're born?*

*Oh, they themselves, incapable of aught else, shall bestow
it*

*On a world that for the giving holds them deeper in its
scorn.*

Sunday Evening Near St. George

'Twas of a Sunday eve I'd seen
Burning low in the west, the sun
Resting after a duty done,
Bathing deep in a golden sheen
The brook, the marsh, the fields of wheat
And e'en the starlings floating by,
Each a spot in the painted sky,
Each with a carol sweet—
And a world was at my feet.

Far on the red horizon line
How rose to heaven the spire dim
Of Kempis Church—how many a hymn
Has passed that spire to One Divine;

How many a buxom, rural bride
Has blossom'd there, or, weeping all,
How many a group has watched a pall;
What swains have sought their sweethearts' side
There in the twilight tide.

Low o'er the hill a lofty pine
And farmhouse stood, with whitewashed wall
And slanted eaves where swallows call,
And nests of clay and feathers twine;
While haply on his porch below,
There glad to rest at close of day,
A father watched his children play
Between the old box hedge's row
And joyed to have it so.

Sweet is a rural life to me—
From out the city's lasting din,
Where strife for gain and horded sin
Abolish sweet simplicity—
Sweet is a life that disbelieves
In grief and sin, but joys in all
Of nature's work—a sunset thrall,
A babbling brook, a dell in leaves
Or upland gay with sheaves.

And ever yet I seem to see
 Within the west the spire dim,
 I seem to hear a rural hymn,
To note the farm and lofty tree,
 The brook, the marsh, the fields of wheat,
And e'en the starlings floating by,
Each a spot in the painted sky,
 Each with a carol sweet—
And a world is at my feet.

Sleep

Praise ye the blesséd Virgin;
 Sing praises loud and deep!
Praise ye the blesséd Virgin,
 Who first invented sleep.

Invented, but never protected
 With patent or right or screed,
But granted man infringement
 Whenever he felt the need.

To sleep the sleep unbroken,
 His wife's arm round his neck,
To sleep as the little children
 Who run at the mother's beck.

To sleep in the mountain forest,
Where whisp'ring spruces keep
Their guarded gossip round you,
Then sleep, sleep, sleep.

To sleep in the lofty palace,
As lady or prince or lord,
To sleep in the thatched cottage,
As king of a humble board;

And after fever and anguish,
While friends around you weep,
To quietly pass, and smiling,
In this, her blessed sleep.

Night is the time for sleeping,
And those who revels keep
Affront the blessed Virgin,
Who first invented sleep.

Praise ye the blessed Virgin;
Sing praises loud and deep!
Praise ye the blessed Virgin,
Who first invented sleep.

Sleeping Out

When the stars are growing stronger and the bats are
flitting by,

And the pink within the west has faded pale,
Then I seek the rocky hillside and 'tis there I watch and
lie,

Watch the brooding stillness growing o'er the vale.

When the moon has paled the meadows and has sought
the rolling hills

Where the pine trees on the skyline break the scene,
And has sought the reedy lakeside where the sleepless
cricket trills

And has checkered through the willow boughs between,

Then the snort of straining engines coming faintly on the
wind,

And the lights that mark the city far away,
Make the place but all the dearer for the things I leave
behind,

For the respite from the hurry of the day.

Was there ever light as golden as the harvest moon can
show?

Was there ever lovely lady had her charms?

No! you wrap your cloak around you, and before you
think or know

You are as a babe within its mother's arms.

The Mind Within the Mind

I sing no lyric song of love,
Or in a ballad strain
Relate heroic deeds until
The music rings again;
But sing, and singing sound a note
To swell on future wind,
The song of the thought within the thought
And the mind within the mind.

We act by impulse or desire,
And without *guessing* e'en
By intuition oft' we *know*
Our fate e'er we have seen;
And all the shrouded thought in dreams,
And all subconscious kind,
Is but the thought within the thought
And the mind within the mind.

Or, do our old ancestral shades
Pervade our living frame,
With all their oldtime joys and woes
And sins we would not claim?
Or, when we struggle, passion swept,
And all to sin inclined,
Is it *our* thought within our thought
And *our* mind within our mind?

We do not know ; or who does know ?
They talk of creed or creed,
All-comforting to those who fear,
Yet not our only need ;
But rather may some larger brain
That we are blameless find,
Because of the thought within the thought
And the mind within the mind.

So here's to him, what e'er his creed,
With broad impartial sight ;
And here's to him with ne'er a creed,
But knows *his* wrong and right ;
And here's to them, the wide world o'er,
Whatever soe'er their kind,
Who ken of a thought within their thought
And a mind within their mind.

The Pest of the Tomb

A tiny mite with corrugated rings
Along its wriggling length, and, for a head,
A spot as red as blood (mayhap 'tis blood !)

Yet there alone so weak, how terrible
In writhing throng within some vaulted tomb
Art thou. Alike the soft and silken white

Form of some princess fair thou dost devour,
Or massive limbs of valiant knights who dared
The horror of a score of fights, unscathed.

Alike to thee are paupers and are kings,
For, with thy broad and democratic taste
Thou lovest all with an impartial love.
Ha, ha, a kind and pleasant grub, indeed
I do admire thy philanthropy!

Out of my sight, oh, vile pest of the tomb!
(Oh why did God create the curséd thing!)
And yet not cursed, for He did create;
And, stay, I'll deal not harshly with thee, grub,
There, wriggle through the earth again and wait
Thy work—and may I wait the will of God.

At St. Joseph's

It was in Lent that many went
To join in daily prayer,
To all incline at Mary's shrine
And solemn vows declare—
And 'mid the throng a lady came
And she was wondrous fair.

Back from her brow the ringlets now
She deftly smooths aside,
The while would gush a lovely blush
As of a blushing bride;
But there withal she had a look—
The semblance of Pride.

And in the crowd a beggar cove'd
In dirty rags and torn,
For he had trod the dismal road
Of Poverty and Scorn—
A road on which a pauper can
But wander all forlorn.

In shame and fear he'd ventured near
The Spirit of the Dove,
Without a creed he knew indeed
That there's a God above,
And Chance had whispered him the word
That He's a God of love.

The Romanist may touch her breast
To form the Cross that leads,
Or bend the knee devotedly
Or tell her carv'd beads;
But of all prayer the heart-felt prayer
Is one the Savior heeds.

McIlvin's Vision

Upon that lonely highway
 (Where each must walk alone
Before he gain that skyway
 That the fiends in hell bemoan)
I roamed at midnight madly,
 In converse with my soul,
When shone the wan moon sadly
 Where rankish grasses roll.

Murmuring and pathetic,
 The wind sighs in the pine,
As prayers of an ascetic
 Borne up to the gods divine;
While voices, joined in chorus,
 Float from the tombs aghast,
To mingle softly o'er us
 'Mid voices of the blast.

When lo, a change appalling:
 Before my vision spread
A gastly scene, enthralling
 All my senses to the dead,
Who now in throngs unnumbered
 Appeared from out the gloom,
As though too long they'd slumbered
 Within the silent tomb.

And each with swinging censer—
Whose livid flick'ring fire
Revealed anew the denser
Rows enrobed in Death's attire—
Had bow'd in adoration
Nigh one of myriad shrines,
A strange and silent nation
Amid the tombs and pines.

Then some extolled Desire,
And Love—that sickly flame
That calls the mind from higher
Thoughts, the hand from deeds of fame—
While others bow'd to Bacchus,
Entangled in his vines,
Which ever must attack us
In guise of sunny wines.

And unto every passion
That vies with man from birth
They bow'd, the while their ashen
Faces seemed to touch the earth;
But, with a gladsome feeling,
I saw (the light sufficed)
That there were many kneeling
Before the cross of Christ.

Oh, strange their forms and fleeting,
 Within the shades of night,
And loud their hearts were beating
 In the height of their delight;
But while this throng unnumbered
 Before their idols bow'd,
God, though they thought He slumbered,
 Had watched from out a cloud.

Again a change appalling :
 A band of trumpets sound
A ringing summons, calling
 Every kneeler from the ground ;
For there in all His glory
 Sat Christ with legions ten—
You know the sad, sad story
 Of how He died for men.

Then from all sides assembling
 Before the blesséd Lamb,
While some with fear are trembling
 And while some with hope are calm,
They hear from Him Immortal,
 The word to seal their fate—
To enter heaven's portal
 Or Pluto's gloomy gate.

There to the right lay smiling
The land the Christian waits,
Its prospect gay beguiling
Him toward its golden gates.
To left there lay extending
A river red with gore,
Its waves in fury rending
Themselves upon the shore.

Ah, blessed those saints ascending
To join that hallow'd band!
God be with those descending
As they cross that bloody sand!
Ah, bright those souls repairing
To gain the heaven's shore!
Ah, woe to those despairing
Within that dark uproar!

Once more a change appalling:
A form divine I see,
A wingéd angel calling
And beckoning unto me;
So bending low, in dreading
To view a form so bright,
I still perceived the shedding
Of halos on the night.

Then, with a low decision,
Giving his words of worth,
He said I had seen *the vision*
Of the life of man on earth.
He said the throng assembling
Before his God's array,
Was but a scene resembling
The scene on Judgment Day.

And, as o'er vale and mountain
The birds sing out their song,
Or as a crystal fountain
Flows in radiance along,
He sang of a distant Aidenn,
Where Kindness had its birth,
With fruit and flowers laden,
Surpassing fruits of earth.

Touched by the holy ditty,
Held in a magic spell,
Thrilled with an awful pity
For hapless souls in hell,
I gazed around me slowly,
Starting my homeward way,
While feelings new and holy
Now o'er my heart had sway.

I said: "I'll go repenting
To act a better part,
In deeds of kindness venting
The new feelings in my heart."
Said: "I shall let to-morrow
The vain world hold its way,
'Twill reap but pain and sorrow
Upon the Judgment Day."

Lines to H. T. S.

Our friendship, what shall we call it,
A race that is nearly run?
Or the warm bright glow of morning,
The hope of a day begun?

Choose now, old friend of my college,
But ponder well in your choice,
And know the soul of my body
Awaits the sound of your voice.

For whether it be for parting,
Or for firmer friendship yet,
My heart is true as steel to you,
But yours—will yours forget?

Mors Spei

Where a solemn blackness surges,
Where the Furies wail the dirges
 Of their woe,
Hope lay dying, slowly dying,
'Mid the Fantae round him flying
 To and fro.

Then, to my deluded fancy,
Views of olden necromancy
 Lit the wall
With a waving, incandescent
Glow, as of the Turkish Crescent,
 Over all.

There by that dim light unreal
Changes ever seemed to steal
 O'er his face,
For it now would light with splendor
Then would every token render
 Of disgrace.

By that light (imaginary)
Deep his face I saw him bury
 In his hands;
Through his fingers, as a grating,
Glared his eyes in contemplating
 Other lands.

Other lands for good or evil?
Lands of greeting rude or civil?
Who could tell!
Hark! there comes a mighty rolling
Sound, commingled with the tolling
Of a bell.

Then, as leaps a noble nation
At the summoning vibration
Of the drum,
Lept Hope forward with a shiver,
Falling, to recover never—
Death had come.

The Virginians

Behold the spot! the sunlight falls
Through tunnel'd limbs and creeps and crawls
From brick to brick on curving walls,
The while the wilful echo calls
Reiteration to our words;
While, from the vinéd chapel tower,
The rusty bell rings out the hour,
And seems to thrill, with mystic power,
Us and the birds.

Or, when the mountain-clear moonlight
Pours o'er the distant ridge at night
Our spirits breathe a pure delight
To note the rows of columns white
 Within its lucid beam;
When at our feet, for all to see
There lies our University,
As calm, and of the purity
 Of any angel dream.

And many men must come and go
And pass along the colum'd row,
Under the Doric portico—
And much the joy and much the woe
 Before the end shall be;
Each man himself his fate must sway,
And live his life from day to day,
And in his own best-thinking way
 Love his Divinity.

Then drink the men in youth who come
To dwell around that gilded dome,
That grows in greatness as the home
 Of shades of those who're gone;
Here's to them all, what'er belief
Or creed they keep, or though in grief
Or joy they live—award a wreath,
For they have walked, the sky beneath,
 Along the pillar'd Lawn.

The World

In geologic past,
When mountains vast
Succumbed to rain and blast—
The herculean blast—
 The rocks would rise
 (Slowly rise)
 To gaze at the skies
 In the land of sighs—
 That desolate land of sighs—

With never trees,
Was every breeze
A hurricane across the seas—
The hot and acid seas;
 And never bird or beast
 Was seen from west to east,
 If there *was* west or east.

When, with a mighty dearth
Of even plants, what worth
The hot and shrinking earth
That gave the mountains birth,
 When sudden quake on quake
 And long and rumbling shake
 Would fold and fault and fissure make!

And, after ages, then
Came beasts beyond our ken
And tribes of savage men,
Of strange mound-building men—
 We know not *how* or *when*—
 Then, when more ages passed,
 These tribes—a race at last—
 Built cities vast.

But Tyre has passed away,
And Rome has held her sway,
And buried is Pompeii
Deep in volcanic clay.
 When ne'er a race can last
 And e'er are changes vast,
 Well may we guess, aghast,
 Through what the world has passed!

We, as the rocks, are clay,
And though but short *our* stay,
Both must as surely pass away
As passes now a day.
 We, as the rocks, who rise
 (Singly rise)
 To gaze at the skies
 In the land of sighs—
 This desolate land of sighs.

Dreams

As weird as are all things unseen
They flit athwart the brain at night—
Dreams, as the moths in candle sheen,
That perish at the light.

The Fairies

God did create the universe great
And the sky is her purple dress,
Bestudded with beads the astronomer reads
For failure or success;
And the beads are the stars whose bended bars
Light all with loveliness,
And give to us fays, in *our* passion-plays,
A love that is little less.

What human could tell of the magic spell
With which our world is rife?
What mortal guess of its tenderness,
Its lack of care and strife?
And we often pray for those who play
The play of Human Life,
Whose only guide, their God beside,
Is mother, or friend, or wife.

And when at the dawn the faintest have gone
Of the myriad, diamond stars,
And the heaven is black in the west with the rack
Of the motherly night of ours,
We sing to our queen on a throne of green,
Of dew and of grassy bars,
Quite happy to trace the smile on her face
By the lingering light of the stars.

*Under the stars, under the stars,
Brothers and sisters of Mars,
At the dawn of the day the fairies play
In the lingering light of the stars.*

The Bells

The bells are telling the birth of day,
All golden are waving the fields of grain,
And a bare-foot lad, with heart so gay,
Is driving his cattle along the lane.
He gladly whistles a merry air,
While, here and there from a briery spray,
As free as a bird from toil or care,
He gathers the berries along his way;

And the bell's ring rolls o'er wood and lea
Unheeded the while in his childish brain,
But oh, how merry and happy he
In driving his cattle along the lane.

The noon-day bells ring out the hour,
And, unto the mind of the happy swain,
Seem to possess a mystic power
As he marches home from the wars again.
For hearing their dying echoes ring,
By the wind so softly wafted away,
He thinks—and his heart for joy could sing—
How the bells will ring on his wedding day;
So every tone of the gentle bells
Rings glad to his heart a sweet refrain,
While ever fondly his mem'ry dwells
On her he so soon is to see again.

The shadows of evening quickly grow,
Now stretching afar o'er the dusky plain,
The heavens to westward yellow glow,
Foretelling the coming of saddening rain.
With faltering gait and bended frame
And gazing with wavering, feeble sight,
An old man heeds while the bells proclaim
The death of the day and the birth of night.

Visions of manhood's earlier years
Mayhap are at play in his weary brain;
Yet, haply his spirit only hears
The dirge of a winding funeral train.

Song to a Smoke

For him who wills, the social blath'rings,
Hollow through seasons and through years,
Those sad conventions, those dull gath'rings,
A quite sufficient cause for tears;
But give, give me, a mild breeze blowing,
A sun low-sunken to its rest,
The pleasure of enjoying, knowing,
An Instructora de Key West.

The lonely marsh-grass meadows quiver,
The tide is racing strong and free,
A silver brown, the rushing river,
A tossing green, the distant sea;
There with a volume of Rossetti,
Turned to his Damozel so blest,
I smoke upon the shaking jetty
An Instructora de Key West.

Didactical

Smoke your Habana, boy,

Puff your Havana, boy,

Let the blue incense float to the sky,

Fragrant, delicious,

Soothing, nutritious,

Don't, above all things, allow her to die.

The aroma, the flavor,

Sun-kissed Cuba gave her,

Will none of them save her

If once she may die,

For the weed, once extinguished,

Has virtues relinquished,

If once you allow all her fire to die.

Smoke your Habana, boy,

Puff your Havana, boy,

Let the blue incense float to the sky.

Fight the fight bravely, boy,

Lead your life gravely, boy,

Let a prayer, heartfelt, float to the sky,

Contrite and penitent,

With a sure, firm intent,

Don't, above all things, let the soul die.

At birth Heaven gave you

Baptism to lave you

Of sin, but 'twon't save you

If once the soul die,

For the soul, once extinguished,
All hope has relinquished,
If once you allow all its fire to die.
Fight the fight bravely, boy,
Lead your life gravely, boy,
Let a prayer, heartfelt, float to the sky.

Louie Dumont

Are you glad for the bright sunrise?
Have you a heart that naught can daunt?
To look at the world through honest eyes
And laugh at its folly, Louie Dumont?

Have you to-day been humble and meek?
Or did your pride in riot vaunt?
How did you act, and how did you speak,
And have you lived as a true Dumont?

On in an elegant, easy way
With all life's comforts one could want,
What have you done for the poor to-day,
What does your heart say, Louie Dumont?

What to-day from your pen has run?
Say, do the phantoms huge and gaunt
That play in the glow of the sunken sun
Kindle your fancy, Louie Dumont?

Think of the mother who prays for you,
Think of a girl in woe and want,
Think of the sister's eyes of blue—
Adieu, and good luck to you, Louie Dumont!

The Perfect Life

The perfect life is hard to lead;
A perfect wife is hard to get;
And when the angels records read
Of him who struggled hard to set
His mode of living to his creed
And win one loved—they'll not forget.

Corn

Come, David, we must work the corn,
For weeds are running rife;
Come, for it is the fragrant morn
When all is bright and naught forlorn,
When all are glad for life.

We see but waving green and sky,
 'Mid rustling music's swell;
Though note the swallow skimming by,
And hear him throw his twit'ring cry
 Into the wooded dell.

To us our work is beautified
 Into a pleasure sweet;
We love to hear the harrow glide,
To see the glebe, new broken, slide
 Away beneath our feet.

Backward and forth we slowly go—
 Nor labor there in vain—
By waving tassel and windy flow
Of leaves that soon shall bend below
 The ears of yellow grain.

Thus mind we of that story rare
 The saints had heard of old,
And free the soil of thorn and tare
To make the corn to grow and bear
 And yield an hundredfold.

Like is a man to a field of corn,
 With good and evil rife—
From dawn till eve, from eve till morn,
Harrow the corn, harrow the corn—
 Harrow the corn of life!

To My Soul

There's not a joy the heart can win

Like that o' conquering sorrow,
And e'en the vanquishing of sin

From it could gladness borrow;
Then, oh, my soul, still onward roll

Out of the Land of Sorrow—
Out of the Land of Used to Be,
Into the gay To-morrow.

For when within the purple arch

Of heaven the clouds are massing black,
And e'en have dimm'd the silver track

Where Luna's steeds triumphant march,
And when the steeds are plunging by

To buffet through the clouded space
And show her kindly, smiling face

Again within the open sky,
Then in my dreams it ever seems

The gracious angels send her,
That by her light throughout the night
She peace to mortals render.

Thus, oh, my soul, still onward roll

Out of the Land of Sorrow—
Out of the Land of Used to Be,
Into the gay To-morrow—

Into a state that poor and great
May of thy gladness borrow—
Out of the Land of Used to Be,
Out of the Land of Sorrow!

The Forest

I am the hero of stately pines
That murmur applause as I pass their lines,
While each salutes with his waving arm
His chieftain back from the war's alarm.

Crow and squirrel, rabbit and hawk
Are the friends with whom I laugh and talk,
Though a bowing-acquaintance have, and should,
With the hornéd owl of the lonely wood.

The shy wee wren in russet sheen,
The modest thrush in coat of green,
To me are more sincere and true
Than friends o' the world I journey through.

Birch and snakewood, laurel and fern
Have longed and waited for my return,
And the indian-pipes at the foot of the tree
To the little mosses cry in glee:
“He is back, he is back to his ain countrie!”

To me the wood is a wond'rous world
With leaves and limbs of peace unfurled,
To soothe away the sting and cares
We all receive in life's affairs.

Out of the silent, placid wood
I come at peace, intent for good,
As kindly deeds arise and part
Out of the forest of the heart.

Leaves

While the summer twilight passes,
While the swallows skirt the eaves,
Lone I lie amid the grasses
Gazing upward through the leaves.

And my brain, in boyish passion,
Many a fairy picture weaves;
Knights and maids of olden fashion,
Pages in their silken sleeves.

Ah, with what a ready pleasure
Youth each fancy new receives,
And unto the fullest measure
In each castled thought believes!

But, with sadly swift decision,
Coming manhood undeceives
Me of all that waving vision
Seen in boyhood 'mid the leaves.

Now I sit and slowly ponder,
And my soul with sadness grieves,
As my thoughts return to wander
In the realm of mem'ry's leaves.

King and Queen and Harry

Years ago, children three,
Would we often tarry,
Playing quite contentedly
As "King" and "Queen" and "Harry."

Brother "King," sister "Queen,"
(And they were to marry!)
But, alas, it will be seen
That I was only "Harry."

They with paper crowns and rings,
I to fetch and carry
All their blocks and toys and things—
For I was only "Harry."

Many years have passed away,
Still, my brain will tarry
Now and then upon the day
Of "King" and "Queen" and "Harry."

On Unveiling Poe Bust at Univ. of Va.

As one who knew so well these old arcades,
A loyal heart should hold thee ever dear,
And though the sun, the sky—all nature fades,
Thy glory still should grow from year to year.

Shall we allow an idle world to say
That in thy native land, so dear to thee,
Thy fame does hold a less potential sway
Than in that sunny France across the sea?

No! ever to this country shall belong
The right to be the first to hold thee dear,
In admiration in a mighty throng
The right to every honor and revere.

Then, as philosophers of old, may we
Look lightly on thy weakness, bad or worse,
And raise a monument for all to see
A tribute to the beauty of thy verse.

Life and Death

To all a new beginning,
Then, a strife
Of penitence and sinning—
Such is life.

A doctor's idle prattle,
Fleeting breath,
A sigh, a gasp, a rattle—
Such is death.

Triplet

To give the lie is evil, and calling names is ill,
Yet say "You liar!" to the thought, "You traitor!" to
the will—
For he who is kind to thought and mind neglects a duty
still.

Storm Clouds

The sunlight shines upon the bay,
The fields are green with clover,
When from the far Northwestern way
The clouds come drifting over;
For on the blue horizon-line
Their masses high are crowding,
And tossing, as the stormy brine,
They now o'er head are shrouding.

The meadows by the river-bank,
From Pembington to Hadow,
And lonely woodland, dark and dank,
Are gloomy in their shadow;
The buzzard sweeps before the gale,
Cleaving the air asunder,
Leaving afar the tempest wail
And rumble of its thunder.

The rising wind, with voice so hoarse,
Loud through the wood is roaring,
The storm-clouds break in all their force
And down the rain comes pouring;
From cloud to cloud with livid light,
Amid the thunder crashing,
The lightning, burning blue and white,
Incessantly is flashing.

But now the storm has spent its strength,
And, with a final shiver,
It quits our battered fields at length
To sweep across the river;
While in the heavens, high and proud,
The sun again is shining,
To gild each ling'ring mass of cloud
With gold and silver lining.

So when in all their gloomy wrath
Life's troubles gather o'er you,
And roll as storm-clouds round your path
To darken all before you,
A suppliant, in meekness bow'd,
Whate'er is sent receiving,
Await the passing of the cloud,
In future light believing.

The Heart of Man

Kindles the heart, that toy of fate,
With Jealousy, Love, Revenge and Hate,
Or longing for the laurel;
While Murder, of these Furies bred,
Bearing aloft his gauntlets red,
Glides away from a victim—dead
In some ignoble quarrel.

Brightens the heart, true poet's pen,
With Charity, Faith, and Love of Men
That seals the soul to heaven;
While from these inborn spirits rise
Calm peace, as of God's paradise,
And from the soul hope new-born cries:
"My sins are past—forgiven!"

Oh, strange the heart, that wond'rous book,
Wherein winged angels ever look
Then quote to Him Immortal;
And, writing on that book of state,
We, in our writing, write our fate—
Whether to enter heaven's gate
Or Pluto's smoky portal.

The Old Man at the Gate

Blank his gaze and feeble his tread,
His voice is pitched and high,
Bent his back and bow'd his head
And oft his weary sigh;
Mayhap in former years, long past,
He'd loved and lost a mate,
And vow'd, as long as life would last,
Lone to live at the gate.

With none to love, he loves the plants
That in his border shine,
And overrun his little manse
With twisted flow'ring vine;
But still one other friend hath he,
Friend to the poor and great,
The Bible, often on his knee,
To cheer him at the gate.

Ah, what a weary life he'd led,
How lonely and how drear,
Now waits but Death to place his head
Upon a wreathless bier;
And, as the seasons onward roll,
We feel he nears his fate,
But know the Lord will ask no toll
From him at heaven's gate.

Song to a Fish

Oh, dweller in the sea,
(Old Neptune's mighty shrine)
Full well I know you live with glee
A life that's wild and bold and free;
I would your lot were mine—
I'd trade your lot for mine.

From deep and rolling blue,
To warm and shallow bay,
With throngs of friends of varied hue
You glide the waving seaweed through,
Finding an ocean way—
A pleasant ocean way.

Or round the coral rocks,
Which ages there have laid,
As ocean craft surround the docks
You twine about the golden locks
Of every shy mermaid—
Of every coy mermaid.

Then, when comes winter bold,
You quickly sail away,
To southern seas and haunts of old
Far from the drifting ice and cold—
And ne'er a bill to pay—
A bill for board to pay.

Vindication of the Poet

What better could a poet do
Than tread the Godly ways
The blessed saints have show'd us to—
To lead a life of praise—
To lead a life of praise, to praise
Where signs of beauty are,
Liquescent as the bended rays
Descending from a star?

The worship of the Beautiful,
The worship of the Good—
That is the creed we all should cull,
The saints have said we should;
And if perchance to song ye should
Tend in the world along,
There is no choice, ye *must* be *good*
To lead a life of song.

The Goddess Flower

In her sylvan bower,
By the murm'ring sea,
Dwells the goddess Flower,
Ruling royally;
Reigning o'er a fairy
People brave and free,
Dwelling in an airy
"Kingdom by the sea."

Crowned with dainty wreathlets
On her lily brow,
As the verdant leaflets
Crown the silken bough;
Thousand fairies singing
Over her asleep,
With their voices ringing
O'er the waving deep.

Rhyming in her leisure
On each leaf—a scroll—
Forming mystic measure,
Written from her soul;
While the smiling ocean,
Breathing on the trees,
Sets their leaves in motion
Wafting melodies.

With a wand of magic,
She, upon the sands,
Ever writes her tragic
And her light commands.
Woe to him (enchanted!)
Who, through sloth or pride,
Leaves her wish ungranted
Till the ebb of tide.

Many a prince has sought her,
Through the kingdom-side,
Ay, they would have bought her
For a winsome bride;
But the wary fairy
Rather far would be
Ruling in her airy
“Kingdom by the sea.”

Dialect, Etc.

Introduction to Dialect, Etc.

Never before has poet penned
A book of verse as short as this one
Now in your hand—the verses, friend,
Pass Edgar Poe, don't miss one.

'After a careful reading, quite,
Taking your time in weighing all things,
Tell to your friends: "This poet's flight
Endangers other bards with small wings."

L'Envoi

Roll on, ye world, with toil and ease,
Sorrow and peace and war and guns,
Or love and shaded apple-trees—
Now for a drink at "Mullison's."

Fire Up

From the swingin', plungin' tender

I must heave a lot o' coal—

“Fire up, boy, fire up!”

Past the switch an' block an' tower

Makin' sixty mile an hour—

“Fire up!”

An' the duffers in the smoker

What do they care for a stoker—

“Give her hell!”—

For we'll make Des Moines on time

Or we'll roll her in the slime

Where the grasses by the trestle wave an' swell.

'Twas a nasty bit o' curve,

We could hear the flanges grind,

An' I know'd that we was playin' cards with Chance,

For they'd handed us our papers

With an engine doin' capers—

An' just the once I thought o' home an' Nance.

But we had our runnin' orders,

An' hell, with all its boarders,

Could not o' made Bill Brady slow her up,

For a millionaire must travel,

So a Pullman tosses gravel—

“Fire up! fire up! fire up!”

With a lurch that made you sick
We was tearin' up the ties,
For at the finish we was goin' some;
Then it ended like a dream
In a cloud o' dust an' steam,
An' everything around went on the bum.
Yes, the papers had it true,
Bill was dead; but I come to
With a little whiskey in a broken cup,
An' my face all blood an' tears,
An' ringin' in my ears,
"Fire up, boy, fire up!"

Railroad Jim

He wasn't liked among the crew,
He had a way o' bossin' you;
Tall, dark o' face, an' rather slim—
We brakemen called him "Railroad Jim."

He run what's called the "local" freight—
An' often at a bangin' rate—
It did him good to let her pitch
An' rattle headlong o'er the switch.

I tell yer, we was sailin' right
One day, when what should sweep in sight
But "Western Mail," long overdue—
I tell yer, she was sailin' too!

Of course Jim know'd there'd been some hitch,
(There weren't no time to make the switch)
So wha'd he do, you want to know?
Why, what men do on C. & O.

He threw the throttle t'other way,
He threw the air brakes into play,
An' mid a roarin' whistle-blast
He rode his engine to the last.

'Twas them hit us, not us hit them,
'An though they shook us stem to stem
'An broke us to the seventh car
We could ha' done 'em worse by far;

For if the bloomin', bangin' freight,
A-sailin' at that awful rate,
Had ever hit that damned express—
Well, sir, I'd hate to clear the mess!

We knew, an' all the papers said,
The mail-train's driver lost his head;
But this here yarn is not of him,
It's got to do with "Railroad Jim."

Jim lay beneath his engine there,
The blood all clottin' in his hair;
One hand around the throttle passed,
One had the brakes a-holdin' fast.

We raised him out then, tender, slow,
The while he spoke, but oh, so low:
"I held her back," was what he said,
"An' say, tell—tell—," then Jim was dead.

Well, Jim's a hero now, we think,
An' when he crossed that river's brink
They met him on the other shore,
Those heroes what had gone before.

For in this smilin' southern land,
Where statues to our soldiers stand,
There's scores an' scores is brave like him,
That sour chap—that "Railroad Jim."

Bole Joe

There loafa around the county here a man we farmers
know
As one who never done no work (leastwise there's none
can show
He done it) but a man the woodlan's ever loafin' through
A week days—not a Sunday, as a workin' man should do.

An', sir, I'm down to tell yer the strangest thing; yer
know

We never had a plantin', to bury rich or po'

But what this simple man would be among the mourners,
so,

With novel appellation, we called him "Holy Joe."

Well, sir, there was a fun'ral, not mor'n two weeks ago,
An' I was there an' looked to me things didn't seem to
show

Up right; when then the parson says a kinder sad an'
slow:

"The fun'ral can't go on, good friends, please send for
'Holy Joe.' "

Then up an 'spoke the sexton: "Why, I thought of
course you'd know

Whose fun'ral 'twas; where Joe has gone a messenger
can't go—

To where his soul has gone I mean—" then kinder
pointin' loy

To where the coffin lay, he says: "Joe's here—that's
'Holy Joe.' "

Buying a Horse

He's gentle, sound in wind and limb—
Why any woman could drive *him*!
Afraid! why he'd eat off the cars!
No, sir, he's got no splints or scars

His dam was Maud, the six-year bay
That won the steeple Stanton way;
His sire was King Henry Seven.
They tell he's paced in 2-11.

Yes, sir, you'll find he'll shake it out
As fast as any on the route,
An' when you pass the Colonel's rater
Jest say "Colonel, I'll see you later."

My price? why ninety's all I get,
An' he's a bargain, too, you bet;
Why, there was lots of men I know
As wanted him, but lacked the dough.

A friend, what some called "Railroad," he
Had said he'd give me eighty-three
An' keep him for his wife to drive—
But now old "Railroad" ain't alive.

Will Tommy Lawless cash this check?
He keeps a tavern down the creek.

No! well, dad blame it, dash my hide,
That means another eight-mile ride.

By gum! I guess I've left unsaid
Two points that kinder skipped my head,
So, though my business here is through,
I'll jest be tellin' 'em to you.

He's bad about a load o' hay,
He wants to run the other way,
But when you see him so inclined
Jest baste him with the whip, behind.

He doesn't care to read the news,
In fact, a paper he eschews,
He'll leer to see it roll and whirl
As one will see a foolish girl;

But that is only showin' life,
An' makes the better horse, or wife,
Jest let him look a bit, you'll see
He'll pass it jest as nice can be.

Well, well, I'll have to hit the road,
I've got to help Dave Hall unload
That car o' beams an' rivet-bolts
To raise the barn for Billie's colts.

I wouldn't sold him, sir, to you,
Unless I'd know'd that he would do.
They all has got their faults of coss—
Well, sir, I hopes you likes your hoss.

A Toast to the Horse

We'll drink a toast to the Horse, lads,
For the Horse is tried and true,
Yea, he is our friend, from beginning to end,
We'll give the poor fellow his due.

Ay, whether he's old and jaded,
And works at the weary plow,
Or follows the bank by the grasses dank
And strains at the veering scow;

Or if he is young and stylish
And full of his youthsome ire,
And his bit will chafe while a maiden's laugh
Floats up from her "rubber tire";

Or if he's an Autumn "hunter",
O'er frost and field and brake,
What metal he shows when the bugle blows
And the pack their music make;

Or if he be wild and wicked,
And kin to the "bronco" branch,
He's death on the herd that madly swir'd
Through the gulch on the Sandy Creek Ranch.

He's there in the rage of battle,
'Mid every terrible force;
We read of the killed and the blood that's spilled—
Who thinks of the pain of the Horse?

So, takin' him all in all, sir,
Find a better if you can,
For, all as a lot, I'll tell you what:
He does what he can for man.

Come, lads, from every border,
(Booted and spurr'd, of course)
Ay, come ye then, if ye stand as men
We'll drink a toast to the Horse.

At Mullison's

"What'll you have?" the barkeep says;
"Give me a glass o' beer," says I,
"None o' your foamin' schooners high
All foam, no beer, it's beer I wants!"

An' what I say is *damn* a bar
Where all such dirty doin's are—
An' give me a good cigar."

I drinks my beer and lights the weed
When in there slumps a railroad man:
"Hey! quick there, barkeep, rush that can!
The freight is couplin' for the grade—
An' God-Amighty never made
A double-header an' her crew
To wait for the like o' you."

The man was drunk—the barkeep knew—
The barkeep give the man the beer,
An' when he'd went I chanced to hear
Him say: "Durn fool, durn fool, how strange
There ain't more wrecks upon the road
With cars o' ore, o' such a load,
Over the bloomin' range."

I has some beer, some soup, more beer,
When in there swings the doors again
An' there there stands, all wet with rain,
As nice a gal as you could see.
"Has Pa been stayin' down here, John?
It's been two days since he was gone
An' Mam an' I are alone."

The barkeep tol' her what he knew—
The barkeeps always know the girls,
I seen him smoothin' down her curls:
"Your Pa was here, but now he's went.
Drop round sometime an' see my Sal,
When you was a gal an' she was a gal
You was her little pal."

I felt I kinder loved the gal,
She looked so true an' straight an' square
The while her Pa was on the tear—
Good Lord! how good the women is!
But what's the use o' talkin' when
Each mother's son, we wothless men,
Cuss 'em, an' drink again.

The barkeep turned an' wound the clock;
The barkeep yawned because he knew
'Twas time the copper's whistle blew
The signal for to close her up.
"So long until to-morrow, John,"
Says I, the barkeep says: "So long."
An' here I ends my song.

The Song of the Night Riders

Oh, we're the night-hawks of the mountain,
And many may hold us in awe,
'Tis pistol and paddle and bridle and saddle
And devil we care for the law,
Ha, ha,
The Devil may go with the law!

As bold buccaneers of the ocean,
Now famous in story and song,
With a clamp of the knees that our bodies with ease
May swing with the rhythmical motion
Of horses, we gallop along,
Ha, ha,
How madly we gallop along!

A-spanning the land is the highway,
A nebulous finger of light,
But a darkening shade by a woodland is made
Where the highway is crossed with a byway
That cuts it to left and to right,
Ha, ha,
God rest 'em who reach it to-night!

Six inches of steel in the barrel,
The purest of lead in the ball,
Of powder ten grains—when we give 'em the reins
We know they will answer for all,
Ha, ha,
Damn well will they answer for all!

*Oh, we're the night-hawks of the mountain,
And many may hold us in awe,
'Tis pistol and paddle and bridle and saddle
And devil we care for the law,
Ha, ha,
The Devil may go with the law!*

The Rhyme of the Sister Ships

John Brawn it was and master,
Ay, master and thirty-three,
A-ready for cod and herring
Had merrily set to sea;
And with him to grace his cabin,
For evil aye goes on,
There sailed one Margaret Owel
Instead of his Lizzie Brawn.

The brig he'd named to her liking—
Her choice was the name she bore,
For she thought, with the pangs of woman,
Of the master's wife a-shore—
So, tossing her head triumphant,
Would whisper the woman wan:—
“Oh, I am his Margaret Owl
In spite of his Lizzie Brawn.”

They'd fished the banks of 'Foundland
A half a month or more,
When, whether by God or tempest,
They sank on a cruel shore;
Despite the lines and the beach-boats,
All, all of the crew were gone,
And with them was Margaret Owl—
None saved but the master, Brawn.

Once more 'twas Brawn, the master,
Aye, master and thirty-three,
Far out on the ocean roving,
His true wife now at his knee;
His ship he'd named in her honor,
All thought of the other gone—
All thought of the *Margaret Owl*
For now 'twas the *Lizzie Brawn*.

But a three-days' rising tempest
Had piled seas mountain high,
They conquered the brig in battle,
And she sank with a shudd'ring sigh;
My God! in the banks of 'Foundland,
In the dark of a misty dawn,
Where foundered the *Margaret Owel*—
There foundered the *Lizzie Brawn*.

Thus died John Brawn, the master,
And his wives in the ocean wrath,
And never may vessel or skipper
Discover their luckless path;
And now do their ocean spirits,
As time and tides go on,
Inhabit the *Margaret Owel*
Or sleep in the *Lizzie Brawn*?

The Duellist

I had killed him ('twas a duel)
Oh, the horrid black remorse,
Oh, the deep and dark remorse—
'Twas premeditated, cruel,
For I knew that in the duel
I could stand as calm and cool
As the Arctic albatross.

Oh, his livid look, the horrid,
Oozing wound upon his forehead
Where the bullet madly tore
When he turned at thirty paces—
Ah, too oft I'd shot the aces
Of the packs I cared so for.

I had killed him ('twas a duel)
Still I hear the pistol ring
Out so fiercely, see him fling
Up his arms toward the sky.
And my haunted, hopeless spirit
Evermore shall see and hear it
As the damnéd years go by.

Empty Wagons

Over the hill ye come, wagons, jouncing,
Proudly all of your floorboards flouncing,
And every bolt in your bodies bouncing
As down the grade ye go—
Empty wagons, empty wagons,
Ye're like to ladies I know.

The chains and yoke, with the pole at prattle,
Vie with the din of the tailboard's rattle,
And the bed and the brake join in the battle
As down the grade ye go—
Empty wagons, empty wagons,
Ye're like to ladies I know.

How e'er the smash and the bang continue,
However the rattle rile and din you,
In spite of your prattle there's nothing in you
As down the grade ye go—
Empty wagons, empty wagons,
Ye're like to ladies I know.

The Fast Express

As comets trail a blazing tail
Through starry wilderness,
With show'ring spark from out the dark
Thunders the fast express;
With clank and roar by Hudson shore,
Over the "Four-Track Line,"
With growing speed sways iron steed
999.

The drivers whirl, the smoke wreaths curl
In ringlets gray and white,
The rail throws back across the track
The strong reflector's light;
The piston moves in oily grooves,
And hisses like the brine,
When through the night roars on in flight
999.

The fires flare; by ruddy glare
We see the tender pitch;
A whistle-shriek; the couplers creak;
We rattle o'er the switch;
And far ahead, all green and red,
The high block signals shine,
When o'er the tracks whirls steel Ajax,
999.

Saving the "Pride of Jefferson"

'Twas March, in the Spring of '65,
At Charlottesville, and all the live
Green budding things foretold of cheer
And peace and love; when to the ear
"Sheridan! Sheridan!" came the cry,
"Sheridan! Sheridan's riding nigh
To bring ten thousand sabers here."

A whirl of dust and the clatter of hoofs,
The jangle of spurs and the clank of steel,
Troop on troop pour in, by four,
Troop on troop, and more and more,
And close and press and wave and reel
And halt as one at the bugle peal—
Halt in the road by the giant tree
At the gates of the University.

Then never a stranger sight was seen,
When down from Lawn and Ranges green
There poured the sages in a throng
To beg the General not to wrong
His arms and flag by any deed
That could but slight the place, and breed
Contempt of learning—for, that done,
'Twould harm the "Pride of Jefferson."

Then Sheridan swore a mighty oath
And bade his troopers all be loth
To burn, and should they burn they'd feel
His hand, and 'twas a hand of steel.
Then gave he orders to his staff,
Then mused awhile, then, with a laugh,
Quoth he: "'Twas not so badly done
To spare the 'Pride of Jefferson.' "

But many the dash and escapade,
In which the Colt revolver play'd,
 When young lieutenants, home on leave,
 To bid their mothers not to grieve,
Were forced to saddle and clatter down
The broad main street and out of town,
 With flapping blouse and spurring free
 Pressed by the Yankee cavalry.

And many the foul deed and ill,
For soldiers ever are soldiers still,
 For, whether the leaders were to blame,
 Or be it a spot in Sheridan's fame,
 The truth must ever remain the same—
For peace is peace, and war is war,
And what is once ta'en can return no more.

So this is the tale how Sheridan came
To use his branding-iron of flame,
 And how the sages pled so well
 That Sheridan swore that neither Hell
Nor Heaven nor aught of the Powers that be
Should trouble the University—
 That never should peoples, many or one,
 Threaten the "Pride of Jefferson."

And the race, as one, now dwells no more
On the cruel deeds of a cruel war;
 But the Love of Letters, and Art, begun,
 Smiles at the "Pride of Jefferson."

Notebook Clippings

I

She spoke so low in the waltzes
Ye thought she could hold no guile;
But I'll tell you (for I am her *husband*)
Her tongue is a *rat-tail file*.

Vanity, the Pretender,
In the garb of Wit is dressed;
For our truest friends, and dearest,
Are the ones who listen best.

"Cast not your pearls before swine,"
Is a maxim good and true;
But also have ye a care, my friend,
That they cast not their pearls before you.

They let their rooms to boarders,
And, as far as I can see,
By humble observation,
It means they're *F. F. V.*

If ever you're mad at a nigger,
Oh, do not call him a fool,
You may know he will easier feel the thrust
If you call him simply a *mule*.

They may wrangle of creeds and churches,
Of darkness and of light,
But give me the man (on *American* plan)
Who does what he *thinks* is right.

II

Of Marriages

Of marriages, it seems 'twould better pay
To throw one's crest and coat of arms away
And marry one not quite of one's four hundred,
Than to remain unwed through haughty pride
To seek some stately lady for a bride,
Then marry her and find (by Jove!) one's blundered!

III

Too Much Grass

There's too much Grass in the Sidewalk of my Soul;
The Nigger Boy of Conscience has weeded it away
And placed the Salt of Penitence upon it every day,
But still the Streaks of Green appear as on the seasons
roll—
There's too much Grass in the Sidewalk of my Soul.

IV

At Long Branch

Oh, the squatted population of the beach
Is resting in its customary pose—
Its Hebrew, of gesticulating speech
And superfluous predominance of nose;
Its pretty scanty-bathing-suited girls,
With half-a-dozen dudes or so for each,
Its fakir dukes and recent-barber earls—
Oh, the squatted population of the beach.

Oh, the squatted population of the beach
To me affords a subtle pleasure yet,
As I lie upon the dunes beyond the reach
Of the waves, and of the eyes of a coquette;
And I cannot but regard it as a play,
The oddities of human life to teach,
As I puff upon a pipe and there survey
The squatted population of the beach.

Morning Ride Through Pembington

When into Pembington I rode
It was the early dawning,
And scarce the sun his face had show'd
To set the folks a-yawning.

And cats crept home from nocturn haunts
With shy retreating glances,
As proud as a *Don Juan* who vaunts
His many night romances.

Then dirty gamins, sleepy-eyed,
Waked at my horse's clatter,
And from their attic windows spied
To see what was the matter.

And stately matrons pompously
Threw open wide the shutters,
And scrubbed the steps and sent a sea
Of suds along the gutters.

Then tripped old maids from doorways down,
A world of wisdom in their faces,
Tall, straight of back, in faded gown
And not in need of laces.

And soon the chimneys sent the smoke
In windy columns flying,
And sputt'ring noises plainly spoke
Of something that was frying.

Then came to me a thousand smells,
And, be I not mistaken,
The one that eloquently tells
Of onions and of bacon.

And now I reach the village pump
That gives a steady thumping,
Surroun'd with village maidens plump,
And swains—to do the pumping.

And past the village pump I speed,
And clatter o'er the bridges
That cut the town from marsh and mead
And distant rolling ridges.

And looked so green the fields along,
And looked so calm the cattle,
My heart could not refrain the song
I chanted from the saddle.

An August Day

The woods are dim and hazy,
The wheel is still and lazy,
Beside the little tavern on the Red Clay creek;
Where sits old Peter Murphy
And many another worthy,
In gingham shirt and cowhide boot the harvest-fly to
flick.

There sits John Ward, the upright,
Who ever takes his cup right,
And sets it empty on the bar and only has the one;
And Alec, ever ready
To drink, with hand unsteady,
And eye that eloquently tells his usefulness is done.

And "Holy Joe" is there, too,
Nor is there one will care to
Say aught while he in nasal drawl gives out prediction
shrewd
Pertaining to the weather,
A topic ready ever
When corn-cob pipes on ledges rest and *Battle Axe* is
chew'd.

Bill Green, Dave Hall, Dave Louther,
One oft' may see them plough their
Small stony farms that tower high o'er orchards,
stream and mill,
And when the winds are blowy,
The blossoms floating snowy,
The little stream would almost seem a heaven beside
their hill.

Good men they are, but homely,
Their daughters very comely,
 Their children sets of healthy brats who raise plu-per-
 fect cain;
They smoke the corn-cob longly,
They drink their liquor strongly,
 And in this pleasant harvest-time they fear their God
 —and rain.

Rascal

There's a neat little farm by a river's broad bend,
And there every autumn I pass with a friend,
 With a gun and my dog, for the shooting is good,
 And the people there live as a gentleman should,
With great open fires of great blazing logs
And plenty of liquor and horses and dogs—
 But their registered bitches I reckon as nil,
 I am true to my lovely old Rascal still.

He hasn't a pedigree long as your arm
And yet he can find every bird on the farm,
 And the way he can trail 'em you'd scarcely believe,
 But here's the great trouble, he'll never retrieve,
You may train, you may coax, you may beat as you will,
He's the same old hard-headed Rascal still.

When we hunt in the brush and I've made a neat hit,
And the bird has pitched down in a briery pit,
It is then of all times that I heartily grieve
And wish that old Rascal could learn to retrieve;
And angry and dusty and thirsty and hot
I threaten to teach him a lesson with shot—
When at hand he breaks through, to my mighty surprise,
And gazes up at me with questioning eyes,
And a look in their corners as though he would say:
"Best keep to the stubble, these briers don't pay."

And when we return to the farm with our game
Poor Rascal is thoroughly tired and lame,
For a dog from the city has very soft feet
Unfit for a hunt o'er the stubble of wheat;
So a rug by the fire on which he can dose
Is thrown, he outstretches his paws and his nose.
Ah, any good sportsman can picture the sight
As we sit with our wine and our yarns through the night,
And of all whose love for the gun is true
Each has his own lovely old rascal, too.

A Hunt

A sweet wild rose and a falcon feather,
Guns and a dog and an autumn day,
When she and I on the moor together
Hunted the covey out of the heather,
In typical sportsman way.

In her hat the rose and a falcon plume,
In her hands a little twenty bore,
And the feathered beauties met their doom
As I scarce had seen before.

Doubles and singles, left and right,
The little gun spat fiercely out;
Why did *I* miss? what ailed *my* sight?
What *could* I have been about?

The reason is that sportsmen know
When it is etiquette to miss;
And men from climes of sun to snow
Are—well, it was but a kiss.

So this is the song of the rose and the feather,
The guns and the dog and the autumn day,
When she and I on the moor together
Hunted the covey out of the heather,
In typical sportsman way.





NOV 23 1907



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